

The Order of Celebrating Matrimony

Mark Middleton – revised 3/2025

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General Information

My personal fee for weddings is \$250. Cancellation fee is \$100.

I frequently work with the following musicians all of whom I highly recommend, assuming they are available on the date of the wedding:

- Marion Oliver (flute), charges an additional \$100.
- Justin Hernandez (vocalist - Baritone) charges an additional \$150.
- A.J. Garcia (guitarist and/or drummer) charges an additional \$175.
- Randall Wayne (bass player) charges an additional \$100
- Carmen Gonzalo (vocalist - Contralto) charges an additional \$250.
- Tina Benedict (vocalist - Contralto) charges an additional \$125.

Please let me know as early as possible which songs and, if you wish, combination of musicians you would prefer so that we can reserve the date and begin the rehearsal process. If you would like to draw on my experience, I am more than willing to select songs for you.

For those who do not regularly attend the Masses for which I provide music, I am a pianist, vocalist, and guitarist. More information can be found at **www.markmiddleton.me**

Thank you!

General Guidelines for music at Catholic Weddings

Music selected should

- Facilitate the congregation's ability to fully participate in the sung prayer.
- Give glory to God
- Aid the congregation in celebrating God's presence in our lives.
- Help the assembly pray together more vibrantly and give thanks to God for your marriage.
- Be beautiful, appropriate, and within the realm of possibility.
- Be something with which the assembly can sing along.

Selected music should not

- Contradict the church's values of marriage or Christianity
- Take away from the prayerfulness

Music at Catholic Wedding Liturgies

Wedding liturgies are first and foremost a church ritual that needs to follow the principles and rules of the official public rites of the Catholic Church. Because you have chosen to invite Christ to make your love a sacrament, the music you choose for your wedding must express this unique and distinct encounter. Music that is suitable for a regular Catholic Mass is what is usually recommended and most appropriate for use during a Catholic wedding liturgy.

“The lyrics of songs chosen for the wedding liturgy express the Christian concept of life, rather than one which is purely secular. The liturgy of marriage celebrates not only the human love between two persons but also their relation to God who is love. The texts must always be in conformity with Catholic doctrine, indeed they should be drawn chiefly from Holy Scripture, and from liturgical sources. (Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, Vatican Council II, #121)

Catholic wedding music is something that the assembly should be able to sing together. It should also fulfill the specified function of each part of the liturgy, fitting the purpose, length, and assigned texts, if any, for each particular moment.


“If it is done well, this special form of prayer unites the whole assembly together in one voice and becomes a window onto divine beauty.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church #1156; cf Sacrosanctum Concilium 112).

If you have specific non-liturgical songs and/or recordings that you would like to use, please consider using them at the rehearsal dinner or reception. During the liturgy itself, live musicians and appropriate liturgical music is what is allowed.

From the Guidelines published by the Diocese of Sacramento:

H. Music

The parish, through its music ministry, is to be prepared to offer assistance with the preparation and presentation of music for the Wedding Liturgy. **All music associated with any liturgy of the Church is to be appropriate, sacred, and of a liturgical nature. Secular or popular music is not to be admitted during the celebration.** Those parts of the liturgy which are sung should provide the opportunity for participation by the entire assembly. Couples are to be aware that all music for the wedding is subject to approval by the pastor or those to whom he has entrusted this responsibility.



Does music in the celebration enable these people to express their faith, in this place, in this age, in this culture? (Music in Catholic Worship #39)

Musical Selections

Preludes:

The arrival of your wedding guests may be accompanied by instrumental music or a vocal solo. The music should keep with the event to follow, rather than selecting a “favorite piece” that is unsuitable within the ceremony. Unless silence or specific pieces are requested, an instrumental medley of liturgical selections with the themes of love and marriage will be played.

Opening Procession (Canto de Entrada):

As you consider music for the opening procession, keep in mind that, liturgically, the opening procession is meant to unite us and remind us that God draws us together through the love of Christ and the love of the wedding couple. This opening procession does not have to be instrumental – it can be sung, with lyrics that express our faith in Christ who unites us.

Instrumental Selections

- Canon in D (Johann Pachelbel) - Instrumental
- Prelude in C (Johann Sebastian Bach) – Instrumental

English/Spanish/Bilingual Selections (can be instrumental)

- Glory and Praise to Our God/Glorifiquemos a Dios (Dan Schutte)
- Love Divine, All Loves Excelling/Sólo Excelso, Amor Divino (HYFRYDOL)
- Morning Has Broken/Despunta el Alba (BUNESSAN, Eleanor Farjeon)
- O Love of God/Amor de Dios (Bob Hurd)
- Praise to the Lord/Alma, Bendice al Señor (LOBE DEN HERREN)
- Sing a New Song/Canten un Cántico (Dan Schutte)
- Sing to the Mountains/Desde los Altos (Bob Dufford)

English Selections (can be instrumental)

- God, Who Created Hearts to Love (LASST UNS ERFREUEN)
- Sing a Joyful Song (Jim Farrell)
- Table of Plenty (Dan Schutte)

Spanish Selections (can be instrumental)

- Juntos para Toda la Vida (Estela Garcia-López)
- Una Fiesta de Amor (Eleazar Cortés)

The “Bridal Chorus” (commonly known as “Here Comes the Bride”) from Wagner’s opera, Lohengrin, is a theater piece which has nothing to do with the sacred liturgy – In fact, this piece actually accompanies the couple to the bedroom, not the altar. It is not allowed at Catholic weddings.

Responsorial Psalm:

After the first reading, a brief silence is observed to reflect upon the Scriptures. After this reflection, a Responsorial Psalm is sung. Some recommended Psalms are included below. It is possible that the musical setting may vary slightly from the text/response listed in the planning guide.

- Psalm 32 (33): The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. / La tierra llena está de tus bondades.
- Psalm 33 (34): Taste and see the goodness of the Lord. / Gusten y vean qué bueno es el Señor.
- Psalm 102 (103): The Lord is kind and merciful. / El Señor es compasivo y misericordioso.
- Psalm 111 (112): Blessed the man who greatly delights in the Lord's commands. / Dichosos los que aman de corazón los mandamientos del Señor.
- Psalm 127 (128): Blessed are those who fear the Lord. / Dichosos los que temen al Señor.
- Psalm 144 (145): The Lord is compassionate toward all his works. / El Señor es bueno con todos.
- Psalm 147 (148): Let all praise the name of the Lord. / Que todos alaben al Señor.

Preparation and Presentation of the Gifts (Preparación de las Ofrendas):

This point in the liturgy is a short, quiet transition to the Liturgy of the Eucharist. A short instrumental piece is often best, however some recommended hymns are listed below. Please keep in mind that it is likely that only one verse of a song will be sung due the short nature of the moment.

English Selections

- 10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord) (Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman)
- Drawn To You (Sarah Hart)
- Love Never Fails (Ken Canedo, Jesse Manibusan)
- Only A Shadow (Carey Landry)
- Servant Song (Donna Marie McGargill)
- Set Me as a Seal (Matt Maher)

Spanish Selections

- El Amor Nunca Pasará (Eleazar Cortés)
- Nadie Te Ama Como Yo (Martín Valverde)
- Si Yo No Tengo Amor (Tradicional)
- Te Seguiré (Estela Garcia-López)
- Un Mandamiento Nuevo (Tradicional)

English/Spanish/Bilingual Selections

- Hold On To Love/ Aférrate al Amor (Jesse Manibusan)
- I Have Loved You/Te He Amado (Michael Joncas)
- Prayer of St. Francis/Oración de San Francisco (Sebastian Temple)
- When Love is Found/Hallar Amor - ¡Qué Bendición! (O WALY WALY)
- Wherever You Go/Adonde Tú Vayas (Gregory Norbet)

Communion Processional (Canto de Comunión):

Congregational participation is recommended, as this point in the liturgy focuses the assembly on its unity in the Body of Christ:

Spanish Selections

- El Amor Nos Unió (Carlos Rosas)

English Selections

- A Place At Your Table (Ben Walther)
- Amen, Let It Be Done (Curtis Stephan)
- Beautiful Is Your Love (Josh Blakesley, Sarah Hart, Marc Byrd)
- Bread of Angels (Curtis Stephan) (English/Latin)
- To Live with Him Forever (Sarah Hart, Robert Feduccia)

English/Spanish/Bilingual Selections

- Ang Katawan Ni Kristo (Ricky Manalo and Pia de Leon) (English-Tagalog Bilingual)
- Be Not Afraid/No Temas Más (Bob Dufford)
- Miracle of Grace/Milagro de Gracia (Curtis Stephan)
- One Bread, One Body/Un Pan, Un Cuerpo (John Foley)
- Pan del Cielo/Bread from Heaven (Iván Díaz)
- Pescador de Hombres/Lord, you Have Come (Cesáreo Gabaráin)
- Ubi Caritas (Bob Hurd) (Refrain is in Latin. Verses in Spanish and/or English)
- Ven al Banquete / Come to the Feast (Bob Hurd)

Devotion of Mary:

If presenting flowers to the statue of Our Lady, a Marian song, or instrumental piece can be used. Appropriate selections are below:

- Ave Maria – (Schubert)
- Del Cielo Ha Bajado [Oh, Virgen Sin Mancha] AVE DE LOURDES
- Dios Te Salve, María (J. Sosa)
- Hail Mary: Gentle Woman/María: Dulce Madre (Carey Landry)
- Santa María del Camino (Espinosa)

Closing Procession (Canto de Salida):

At this point in the liturgy, you may choose a festive song or instrumental piece that expresses your joy. Unless otherwise specified, these can be either sung or instrumental.

Instrumental Selections

- Jesu - Instrumental (a more contemporary setting of JS Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring")
- Ode To Joy (Lively Instrumental)

English/Spanish/Bilingual Selections (can be instrumental)

- Alleluia! Love is Alive / ¡Aleluya! Vive el Amor (Steve Angrisano, Jesse Manibusan, Sarah Hart)
- Canticle of the Sun / Cántico del Sol (Marty Haugen)
- City of God / Ciudad de Dios (Dan Schutte)
- For the Beauty of the Earth / Por la Excelsa Majestad (DIX)
- How Can I Keep from Singing / ¡Debo Seguir Cantando! (ENDLESS SONG)
- Now Thank We All Our God / De Boca y Corazón (NUN DANKET)

English Selections (can be instrumental)

- A Rightful Place (Steve Angrisano)
- God, Who Created Hearts to Love (BEACH SPRING)
- May God Bless You (George Van Grieken)
- Take the Word of God With You (Christopher Walker, James Harrison)

Spanish Selections (can be instrumental)

- Amar (Tradicional)
- Amor Es Vida (Tradicional, adapt. por Martín Verde Barajas)
- Id y Enseñad / Go and Teach (Cesáreo Gabaráin)

*Please note: The so-called traditional "Wedding March" by Mendelssohn is incidental music from Shakespeare's comedy, *Midsummer Night's Dream* to accompany a farcical wedding. Again, this piece is hardly liturgical and is not permitted in Catholic liturgies.*

Mass Setting

Spread throughout the Mass, the *Gloria/Glory to God*, *Alleluia/Gospel Acclamation* (or during Lent, the *Verse Before the Gospel/Versículo Antes del Evangelio*), *Holy/Santo*, *Memorial Acclamation/Aclamación al Memorial*, *Amen/Amén*, *Lamb of God/Cordero de Dios*: These Acclamations have assigned texts which cannot be changed. They are dialogues that heighten the solemnity and punctuate the importance of what is happening in the ritual. If you have a specific request it will be considered, otherwise the usual settings are Mass of Christ the Savior (Dan Schutte) or Misa del Pueblo Inmigrante (Bob Hurd).

Please Note:

Songs containing the word "Alleluia" are not allowed during the season of Lent.

Choosing an outside musician at OLMC

If you choose to use an outside musician, OLMC has required that I approve the music for liturgical correctness and textual accuracy. I am also the contact person regarding the use of the piano, organ, microphones, and other sound equipment. Because of this, there is a \$150 bench fee, payable by cash or check (made out to Mark Middleton) that can be delivered to the OLMC office.

Outside musicians will be strictly held to the guidelines presented in this document.

The most important considerations on my end are less about the musicianship of the person/people you are bringing in. I am sure you have heard the musician(s) already through demos or live performance. Where I am most concerned is with the liturgical aspect of the music. The text/lyrics of each piece have to be appropriate, and the musician(s) have to know the current guidelines and order of the Catholic Mass.

It is important that, in addition to the hymns, they must use a Mass Setting with the EXACT words (The United States Congress of Catholic Bishops, USCCB, is very specific and clear about this). No words are to be added, removed, or changed with the exception that a word or phrase can be repeated due to musical considerations. (Example: in the "Glory to God" the words are "Glory to God in the highest." Two of our musical settings repeat the first three words "Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest.") An example of what cannot be changed is in the Mystery of Faith. The acceptable translation is "we proclaim your death, O Lord, until you come again." Using a version with the text "we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory" would not be allowed.

- The Gloria must be sung at the Mass, this is part of the rite! (Exact words as described above).
- The Responsorial Psalm is sung. This should be as close as possible, but doesn't need to be exact to the text.
- The Gospel Acclamation is sung.
- The Holy is sung (must be exact).
- The Mystery of Faith is sung (must be exact).
- The Great Amen is sung (must be exact).
- If the Our Father is sung, it must be exact. It also needs to be a musical setting that the people in attendance can sing (the Our Father is a community prayer). Typically, on Sundays this is recited.
- The Lamb of God is sung (must be exact).

Once the final selections are made, please submit them to me so I can double-check them, as we again want make sure everything is liturgically correct.

Regarding instruments and microphones:

Please keep me up-to-date with your sound requirements. If you need to use microphones or not, if you need more than 4 music stands, etc. The piano is OK to use as-is, but all other instruments are privately-owned and do not belong to the church. They are not to be used without prior permission.

Planning Guide

Please note: You can use the form and return it via email or text, or give a printed copy to Mark.
Another option is to simply compose an email with all relevant information. If you do not wish to choose the individual songs used at the Mass, please let me know that as well.

Date and Time of Ceremony: _____

Church where the Wedding will take place: _____

Groom's Name and contact info (text/email): _____

Bride's Name and contact info (text/email): _____

Opening Procession: _____

Responsorial Psalm: _____

Presentation/Preparation of the Gifts: _____

Communion Processional: _____

Devotion to Mary: _____

Closing Procession: _____